

Explanations

Problems

This unit assumes that the basic rules for forming reported speech are already known.

- The most important rule is to use verb forms that are natural in the situation.

'I'm happy to help you' she said.

*She told me she **is** happy to help us.*

In the above example, the verb has not been put one stage back in the past. In the following example, the same is true.

'I wanted to go to the cinema, but John wasn't so keen,' said Sue.

*Sue said that she **wanted** to go to the cinema, but John **wasn't** so keen.*

- Reported speech with modal auxiliaries

If the reporting verb is in a past verb form, modals change where there is a 'past' equivalent.

Will – would can – could may – might

Could, would, and might do not change.

*I might be late. She said (that) she **might be** late.*

Should changes to would if it is used as a first person form of would.

*I should love to come. She said (that) she **would** love to come.*

Otherwise should remains unchanged.

*You should rest. They said (that) I **should** rest.*

Must can be reported as either had to or remain as must.

- Reported speech with conditional sentences

After a past tense reporting verb, real situations include verb form changes.

If we leave now, we'll catch the train.

*I **told** him that if we **left** then **we'd catch** the train.*

In reported hypothetical situations, verb form changes are not made if the event has reference to a possible future.

If you came back tomorrow, I'd be able to help you.

*She said that **if I came back the next day, she'd be able to help me.***

If the event is clearly hypothetical and impossible, time changes are made.

If I had a spanner, I could fix it.

*He said that if he **had had a spanner he could have fixed it.***

Hypothetical past conditional sentences do not change.

- Don't think

Statements reported with verbs of thinking such as *think, expect, suppose* can transfer the negative from the statement to the verb.

I suppose she won't come. (This means I don't suppose she'll come.)

Reporting verbs

There are numerous reporting verbs, which report the words of others, or our own words and thoughts. Only a selection is given here. Other examples are included in the activities. Only the most useful categories are given here. It is advisable to use a dictionary to check on how reporting verbs are used. See Grammar 19, 21 and 22 for prepositions or *-ing* forms following verbs.

- Verbs followed by *that* + clause (with * can be followed by a person)

<i>add</i>	<i>confirm</i>	<i>feel</i>	<i>predict</i>	<i>say</i>
<i>admit</i>	<i>consider</i>	<i>hope</i>	<i>promise*</i>	<i>state</i>
<i>agree</i>	<i>decide</i>	<i>imply</i>	<i>reassure*</i>	<i>suggest</i>
<i>announce</i>	<i>deny</i>	<i>insist</i>	<i>reckon</i>	<i>suppose</i>
<i>argue</i>	<i>doubt</i>	<i>mean</i>	<i>remark</i>	<i>tell*</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>estimate</i>	<i>mention</i>	<i>repeat</i>	<i>think</i>
<i>claim</i>	<i>expect*</i>	<i>object</i>	<i>reply</i>	<i>threaten*</i>
<i>complain</i>	<i>explain</i>	<i>persuade</i>	<i>report*</i>	<i>warn*</i>

- Verbs followed by person + *to*

advise forbid invite persuade tell ask instruct order
remind warn

- Verbs followed by subjunctive or *should*

Most of these verbs can also be used in the other ways given.

As these verbs contain the sense that someone 'should do' something, *should* can follow them.

They suggested that she should apply again.

More formally, the subjunctive can be used instead of *should*. This is formed from the base of the verb (without third person 's').

They suggested that she apply again.

Some other verbs of this type are:

advise (also: someone to do/against something)

agree (also: to do something, *that* + clause)

demand (also: to do something)

insist (also: on someone doing something)

prefer (also: someone to do something)

propose (also: doing something)

recommend (also: doing something)

request (also: someone to do something)

suggest (also: *that* + clause)

urge (also: someone to do something)

- Verbs which can be followed by *that* + clause containing *would*
All these verbs report statements containing *will*. These verbs can also be followed by 'to do something'.

I'll leave at 8.00.

She decided to leave at 8.00.

She decided (that) she would leave at 8.00.

Others are: *expect, hope, promise, threaten.*

Functions

- Many verbs describe a function, rather than report words.

Look, if I were you I'd leave early.

She advised me to leave early.

Examples are:

admit complain request suggest

advise invite remind warn

agree persuade threaten

- Some verbs describe actions.

Hi, Dave, how are you?

He greeted me.

Examples are:

accept, congratulate, decide, greet, interrupt, introduce

Changes of viewpoint

Changes of time, place and person reference are assumed known at this level. In reported speech, there is no longer a clear reference which can be understood by two people in the same place.

*I left the parcel on **this chair**.*

In reported speech one would have to specify which chair:

*He said he had left the parcel on **the chair by the window**.*

Or the reference may be replaced by a more general one:

*I love **this town**.*

*She said that she loved **the town**.*